

# ROSS BAGPIPE BAGS PTY.LTD.

Geoff Ross  
4 Deep Creek Drive  
East Doncaster  
Victoria 3109  
AUSTRALIA  
Phone 61 3-98465380  
Fax 61 3-98465380  
[www.rossbagpipereeds.com](http://www.rossbagpipereeds.com)



---

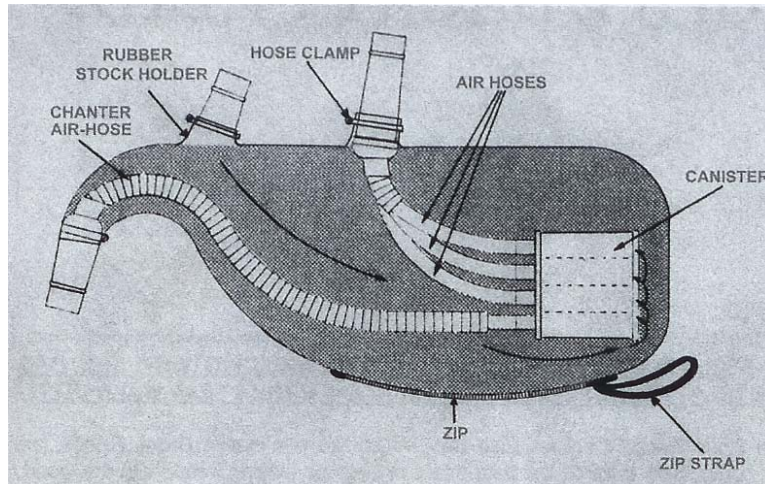
**PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THE BAG ASSEMBLY, AS IMPROPER TREATMENT OF THE PARTS MAY NEGATE THE 1 YEAR WARRANTY.**

Thank you for purchasing the Ross Zipped Canister Pipe Bag, which like our Plastic Drone Reeds, we believe have made a further contribution towards the betterment of bagpipe playing throughout the world. The advantages of the zipped canister pipe bag over conventional hide and sheepskin bags are as follows:

1. The bag is much more air-tight, and never requires seasoning.
2. The combination breathable bag and canister system offers the best moisture control system yet available for bagpipes.
3. The bag is much more hygienic, and can be washed and dried quickly.
4. There is absolutely no cutting or tying-in required, the bag comes complete with stock holders already fitted, ready to secure to the stocks with hose clamps.
5. The bag has a more definite feel and better control due to the design and air-tightness.
6. The air-tight zip allows fast and easy access to inside the bag, which is useful to enable the bag to fully dry out after playing for long periods or in damp weather.
7. The hose system offers quick, convenient retrieval of reeds if they become unseated.
8. The canister system can be changed to add moisture to your reeds for hot, dry climates.
9. Reeds will last much longer, have greater stability and far less trouble due to the drastically reduced moisture contact.

The bag itself is made from a woven nylon, and coated with a hydrophilic layer which allows moisture vapour to be drawn through, yet still retains a very high level of air-tightness. There is a very minor air loss over a period of time, but this has no affect upon playing pressure, and is very much superior to hide or sheepskin bags in that regard. Due to the moisture transference and lack of bag dressing, the build-up of fungus or bacteria is greatly reduced, which creates a much healthier internal environment. There is almost no stretching as with conventional bags, which contributes to more definite control over air-pressure and stability of tone. The purpose of the air-tight zip is to enable access to the canister and hoses for the initial setting up, and also for future change over of canisters when required. Also this conveniently enables the bag to be left open to

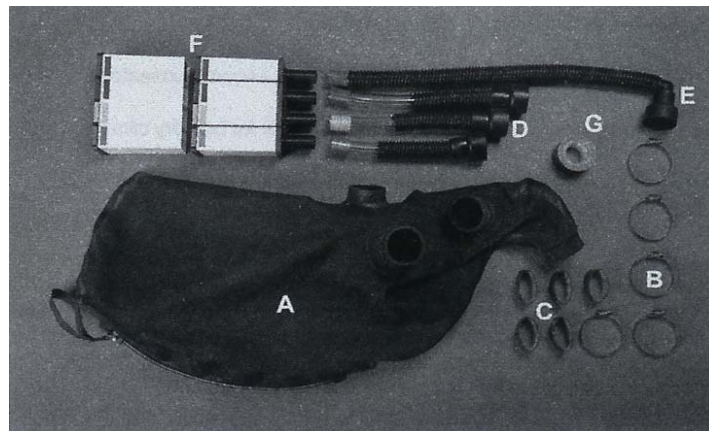
allow the inside to completely dry after playing. The stocks are connected via air-hoses to a canister filled with granules (the highest grade cat litter), which ensures that the only way air can reach the reeds is via the canister, thereby allowing only dried air to reach the reeds, see FIGURE 1.



**FIGURE 1**

**LIST OF SUPPLIED PARTS**

- A 1 ROSS BAG FITTED WITH FITTED STOCK HOLDERS & ZIP
- B 5 HOSE CLAMPS
- C 5 RUBBER SLEEVES FOR STOCK FITTINGS
- D 3 AIR-HOSES FOR CONNECTION TO THE DRONE STOCKS
- E 1 AIR-HOSE FOR CONNECTION TO THE CHANTER STOCK
- F 2 CANISTERS COMPLETE WITH DRYING GRANULES
- G 1 ROLL OF WATER-PROOF TAPE



**FIGURE 2**

**SETTING UP THE BAG**

The first step is to identify the stocks ie; outside tenor, middle tenor etc., then remove them from your old bag and give them a thorough wash, then dry.

Next you will need to connect the air-hoses to the chanter and drone stocks. We have colour coded the hoses to show which hose should be connected to which stock, and then to which section of the canister. The colour matching is as follows:

RED	CHANTER STOCK
BLUE	BASS DRONE STOCK
YELLOW	MIDDLE TENOR DRONE STOCK
GREY	OUTSIDE TENOR STOCK

The reason the air-hoses need to be identified, is that they are of different lengths, which is to enable the canister to lie on its side correctly in the bag so that it will be virtually unnoticed whilst playing.

Identify the appropriate stock for each air-hose, then pull the rubber cups on the air-hoses onto the bottom of the relative stocks, so that the inside projection slots into the standard tying-in groove at the base of each stock (FIGURE 3). You will now need to further secure the air-hose connection onto the stocks by utilizing the waterproof tape provided, one and half winds will be sufficient (FIGURE 4).



**FIGURE 3**

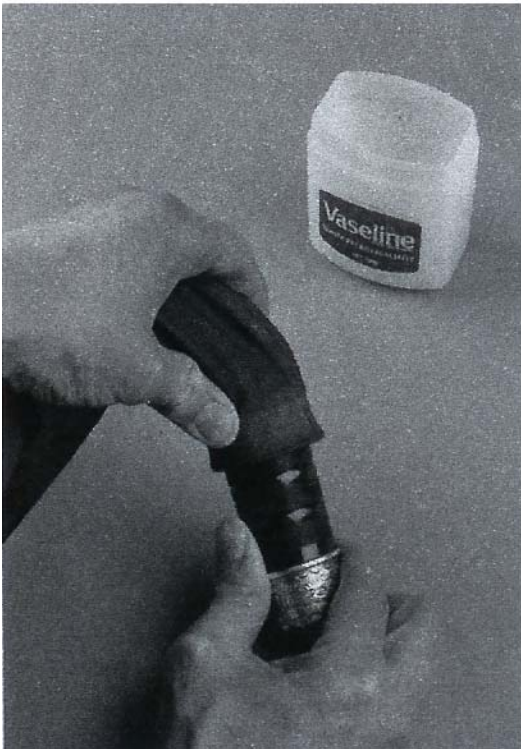


**FIGURE 4**

To make insertion of the stocks easier, smear some Vaseline around inside all the rubber stock holders connected to the bag. Now locate the chanter stock, and insert the colour coded end of the hose into the chanter stock opening and feed the hose in, then finally twist the chanter stock into position inside the chanter stock holder. At this stage make any adjustments you feel necessary to the angling and height of the chanter stock (FIGURE 5). Before securing the stock with one of the accompanying hose clamps, stretch one of the rubber sleeves provided over the outside of the bag where the clamp will be fitted (FIGURE 7), this is to help prevent the edges of the clamp from cutting into the bag material. Then position the clamp and tighten securely for the chanter stock. The chanter stock clamp might require a tighter twist than the other stock clamps to ensure no air-leakages.

For the blowpipe stock, follow the same procedure as for the chanter stock, and again make any further angle adjustments if necessary, prior to stretching one of the rubber sleeves over the rubber stock holder, then fasten with the hose clamp, but **DO NOT** over tighten the clamp beyond the point whereby the rubber starts to be forced into the grooves of the hose clamp, as you will have already attained air-tightness at this stage, and any further tightening will only serve to weaken the rubber stock holder.

The three drone stocks are inserted into the appropriate stock holders in the bag, and angled according to preference. Once positioned, as with the blowpipe stock holder, stretch the rubber sleeves over the clamping positions of the rubber stock holders prior to clamping, but again **DO NOT** over tighten the hose clamps. Another point to consider, is to locate the tightening nut of the clamps so that they will have the least potential contact with the stocks or bag itself, including when they are stored in you pipe box. One suggested position is shown in FIGURE 6.



**FIGURE 5**



**FIGURE 6**



**FIGURE 7**

Once all the stocks and air-hoses are in place, unzip the bag by pulling the strap towards the front of the bag, disconnect the bottom lid (with 4 black tubes) from the canister, then follow the colour coding to connect the air-hoses onto the bottom lid of the canister in the order shown on page 3.

To help fit the tubes to the bottom lid, dipping the ends of the tubes into hot water, and smearing a bit of Vaseline onto the 4 black tubes of the bottom lid will make the job much easier. Make sure you fit the hoses on firmly, and that they are fitted in such a way that the canister will sit vertically by itself. To check this, hang the bag upside down by hanging onto the chanter stock and observe the position of the bottom lid, it should be vertical. If not, adjustments can be made by simply twisting the tubes one way or the other to ensure that the lid is sitting vertically. This step is important if you don't want to be aware of the presence of the canister whilst you are playing. See FIGURE 8. Before connecting the canister, we recommend that you use a vacuum cleaner to either blow or vacuum any residual dust from each section of the canister, as there will almost certainly be some dust accumulated from the friction of the granules in transit to and from wherever you have purchased the canister bag system. Once the dust is removed, connect the canister to the bottom lid, then stretch the "O" rings over the canister as per FIGURE 9, and place inside the bag.

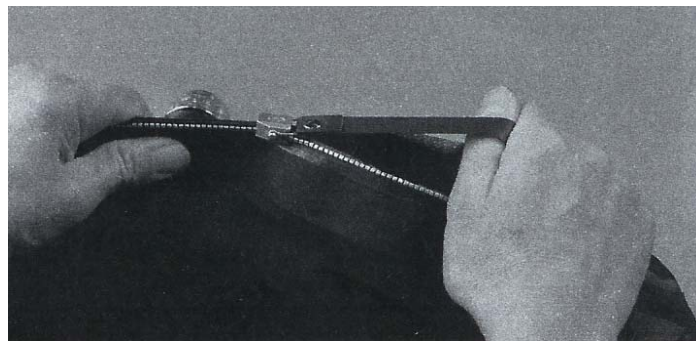


**FIGURE 8**



**FIGURE 9**

All that is left now is to do up the zip in a smooth action without excessive force at either end, as in FIGURE 10.



**FIGURE 10**

After having completed all of the above, it is best to connect the blowpipe only, and place stoppers into the other stocks and test for air-tightness, particularly at the chanter stock area, and make any adjustments if needed. Once this test is satisfied, the bag is now ready to have the remaining drones and chanter connected, and then you can play your pipes.

### **AIR-TIGHTNESS EXPECTATIONS**

Despite the claims, no bagpipe is absolutely air-tight, ie. loses no air whatsoever. If that were the case, one could inflate the bag and come back a year later and it would still be just as air-tight as when you left it. Joints, and even the stocks themselves can have minute leaks, but most have no noticeable affect. What a piper should expect is that there is no noticeable loss of air through any other avenue except the reeds. A good test for any bag regardless of the type, is to stopper all the stocks apart from the blowpipe, then blow up the bag as tight as you can. If after say 30 seconds you cannot input even the slightest amount of air, then the bag is airtight enough for your needs. The average piper would blow into the bag somewhere between every 2 to 5 seconds, and so if it takes much longer than 30 seconds to notice any air-loss through whichever means, then the air loss is purely academic, and will have no real affect upon your playing at all.

### **MORE INFORMATION ON MOISTURE CONTROL**

It may appear that the air flow will be severely restricted by having to pass through a canister full of drying granules, but it actually has almost no bearing upon blowing pressure at all. We have designed the canister so that the drones are subjected to only dry air, whilst the chanter reed will always have some degree of moist air going through it, as completely dry air has a rather adverse affect upon chanter reed tone. The canister cavity for the chanter is designed so that there are 3 alternative positions in which to regulate the amount of moist air that can travel to the chanter reed. The larger the empty side of the cavity, the greater the amount of moisture can be allowed through. What level will be most suited to your own requirements, is simply a matter of trial and error. Do not feel restricted to the set-up as so far described, some pipers prefer to have no granules in the chanter cavity of the canister, yet still have the chanter hose connected, whilst others remove the chanter tube altogether, and employ the use of a tube spit trap, which makes the air go to the back of the bag then have to work its way to the front before reaching the chanter reed. This method does have merit in that saliva and enzymes are kept out of the bag, and the tube acts as yet another moisture control.

The effectiveness of the canister is governed by several factors:

1. How wet a blower you are.
2. The temperature of the air.
3. The humidity of the air.
4. How often you play your pipes, and for how long.
5. How often, and how effectively you dry out the drying granules.

Therefore we can say that the bag and canister system will offer you the best available moisture control, but this DOES NOT imply that you will not get ANY moisture onto your reeds. For a start, the chanter requires some degree of moisture for optimum tonal performance, and although you may still allow a low percentage of moist air through, it will accumulate over the playing period, but the drone reeds will only start to become damp when the moisture absorbing ability of the granules has been exhausted. In most situations, this takes a considerable amount of playing time to happen. Just how long is it before the moisture absorbing properties of the granules is exhausted is very much an individual thing, which you will need to monitor from time to time. It may be as little as a couple of hours (for extreme situations) or up to a year for very dry blowers.

As a guide, if you happen to notice any build-up of condensation on the surface of the drone reeds or inside the drones, then you can be sure that it is time to change the canister, or re-dry the granules. Obviously, if you completely neglect to ever dry out the granules, then you will get wet reeds sooner or later.

## **DRYING OUT THE DRYING GRANULES**

Simply unzip the zip towards the front end of the bag, release the O rings, then remove the canister from the bottom lid. Take off the top lid and empty the granules onto a plate or bowl that can withstand microwave cooking or oven heat, then place the granules into a Microwave oven for 5 minutes on High, or in a convection oven for around 15 minutes at 450 degrees Fahrenheit or 230 degrees Centigrade. **DO NOT PLACE THE CANISTER INSIDE THE OVEN.** Allow the granules to cool off in a fairly dry environment (or else they will absorb moisture from the air), then pour them back into the canister by using a funnel or jug. Once that is completed, firmly replace the top lid then blow the dust out from BOTH ends of each section of the canister by using a vacuum cleaner on reverse. If you continually fail to carry out this last step, then you will have dust particles accumulate inside your reeds, which will make them leak and cause problems. Finally, either reconnect the canister back into the bag, or else place it into one of the resealable bags supplied, until it is again required.

## **HOW TO SET UP THE BAG FOR USE WITH CONVENTIONAL CANE DRONE REEDS**

The bag was designed with users of Plastic Drone Reeds in mind, but it can be equally beneficial to those pipers who still wish to play cane drone reeds. As with cane chanter reeds, cane drone reeds require some moisture to operate successfully, or else with totally dry air they have a tendency to stop quite readily. So it is a simple matter of reducing the drying time when drying out the granules, or else add a couple of drops of water to each cavity inside the canister after the re-drying process. Again this can only be assessed on a trial and error basis, subject to your climatic conditions, and how wet a blower you are.

## **USING THE BAG IN HOT, DRY CLIMATES**

The canister system can be ideally set-up for use in hot, dry conditions by simply wetting the granules inside the canister. This will ensure that reeds will receive moisture to function properly, and produce their optimum tone.

## **PROBLEMS**

### CLEAN CUTTING-OUT PROBLEMS

Some pipers might experience problems in clean cutting out when first using the canister bag system. It is something that can be mastered by most, and is primarily due to the bag being so much more airtight than you might have been used to. It is really a matter of making sure the canister is sitting vertical within the bag, and mastering the timing of when to stop blowing, along with the appropriate arm pressure to expel sufficient air from the bag, then quickly lift the arm at the conclusion of playing. Another cause of unclean cut-outs can be the use of some of the all-plastic drone reeds, which have very weak tongues. If the above method still doesn't resolve your problem, then we do make our own time tested and proven drone reeds, as played by many, many high profile pipers and bands throughout the world including The Victoria Police Pipe Band 1998 World Champions. The Victoria Police Band has played both the Canister Bags and our drone reeds for many, many years, and clean cut-outs has never been an issue with them!

## WET REEDS

In most cases, to quickly remedy the problem of wet reeds, it is advisable to dry your drones, reeds, stocks etc. as would normally be the case, and remove the canister and replace it with the spare one, which should have been stored in a dry, moisture-proof container. It is also recommended that the inside of the bag be allowed to dry out on completion of your playing sessions. This will not only give you a greater time span for moisture-free playing time when you next play, but as is emphasized below, will greatly extend the life-span of the bag itself.

## THE BAG IS NOT AIR-TIGHT

Make sure that the zip is fully closed, and ensure also that all your joints are sound, and that the valve is functioning properly.

## ZIP MAINTENANCE

If properly used the zip will outlast the bag, but will from time to time, according to the amount of use require the application along the teeth of a dry type of lubricant such as a teflon or silicon spray. Candle wax is just as effective, yet not as convenient to apply. The reason for the lubrication is that after a time the zip will firm up, and needs lubricating to free the zipping action again. **THE ZIP SHOULD NEVER BE STRONGLY BENT IN ANY DIRECTION, AND ANY DAMAGE AS A RESULT OF SUCH ABUSE WILL RESULT IN MAKING OUR 1 YEAR WARRANTY ON THE BAG NULL AND VOID.**

## WARRANTY

Our bags carry a one year warranty, which means that if any bag has a problem that is directly related to a manufacturing fault, then the bag shall be either repaired or replaced at the manufacturer's discretion within a one year period from the date of purchase. Provided that the bag is returned to the manufacturer in good condition without tampering.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE**

For the sake of longevity of the bag, it is strongly advised that you allow the inside of the bag to dry out after playing sessions, this is particularly important for wet blowers and pipers residing in damp climates. The reason for this is that over a period of time, water (particularly when combined with enzymes etc. from your mouth), when left in continual contact with the bag material, helps break down the hydrophilic layer that makes the bag breathable and also air-tight, and thereby will greatly reduce the life of the bag. Signs of this breakdown are extremely small (less than pin hole size) air leakages coming through the bag. Drying the inside of the bag is most effectively done by unzipping the zip and also removing the blowpipe and chanter which allows good access for air to dry the inside of the bag overnight.